

Percussion and Layering

Year 5
Spring 2

Unit Overview

Lesson One - What is Layering?

- This scheme introduces children to layering in music.
- Layering is when music gradually combines different layers of instrumentation to form a more substantial sound for an audience. Adding layers of sound helps to lift the emotional swell of a piece of music and keeps the listener guessing as to what might happen next.
- First of all, split the class into 5 Groups. Each Group will follow their numbered line on the layering grid.
- Play the start of the 'Layering Full Lesson' video up to 1.15m. This shows the children their clapping rhythms. Start the video again and ask the children to clap their rhythm one group at a time. Group 5 need to pay particular attention as their rhythm starts on the off beat! So tell the children to watch for the ball hitting the TOP of the screen for their first three beats.
- When they have practiced this, the children can move onto clapping their rhythms in layers. Play the video from 1.15m to 2.43m. Let the children have a go with their clapping rhythms. We are now layering one track on top of another so the children need to make sure they are clapping the correct rhythm and not being put off by the 4 other groups.
- Next, we will turn the claps into percussion. I have created a dramatic reveal for each of the instruments so don't show the instruments to the children until they have seen the next part of the video. Children love a reveal!
- Make sure you have a Drum, Guiro, Cabasa, Caterpillar and Cow Bell at the ready. I have picked these instruments because they are generally found in Primary School "Music" Cupboards! If you have duplicate instruments please feel free to let more children have a go at once. You may be brave enough to have 5 drums playing at the same time in Group 1!
- Let the children play their parts through, one group at a time to practice. When the class are ready, have a go with playing the whole piece through from 6.00m to the end of the video.
- To finish, feel free to swap groups around and let the children try a different instrument with a different group.
- The 'Layering - Part 1' and 'Layering - Part 2' videos are a simple way to play the full versions of the tracks without having to find them on the original video.

Lesson Two - Layering Level Two

- To start the lesson recap the work on Layering from last week. Ask the children what layering involves and why it is important in music.
- Play the 'Layering - Part 1' and 'Layering - Part 2' videos and let the children have a go at performing them in their starting groups from last week.
- Play the 'Layering Full Lesson 2' video from the start to 1.30m. Just as in the last lesson, split the class into 5 groups and the children can clap their rhythms as they follow the grid. Again, instruments will be revealed and can be given to the correct groups. We have 5 different instruments today so have a look and see if you can find the appropriate instrument or an instrument as close to this new set as possible. Floor Tom, Metal Agogo, Woodblock, Maracas and Sleigh bells.
- The 'Layering - Part 3' video is the full version for ease of use. Try it through a few times and let the children have a go in different groups.

Lesson Three - Listening to Layering and Sight Reading

- The children should now have a basic understanding of how to play percussion in layers.
- Today, they will begin the lesson with a listening exercise. Ask the children to watch to the start of the 'Layering - Listening Exercise' video. Play from the start of it up to 38 seconds. Explain to the children that they are listening out for the instrument that is NOT playing. So, although the images are all there, one of the instruments cannot be heard. Can they deduce which it is. Play the same part of the video again and ask for a show of hands. Reveal the answer from 38 seconds - 55 seconds.
- Carry this exercise on to the end of the video. Be aware that from 4.15m the children will be listening for the instrument that has been ADDED, not taken away.
- Sight Reading. This skill is extremely useful for any musician. Sight reading is when a musician sees music for the first time and plays it without any prior practice. Reading the music from sight. The children are now going to try this with the 'Sight Reading' video.
- Split the class into 6 groups of 5 children. If you have more or less than 30 children adjust accordingly. As long as every child gets at least one go. Starting with the first group, make sure each child has a 'Player' number from 1-5. Play the video from the start and it will reveal what each child is to play. Hand out the correct instruments depending on each Child's number. Let them have a go at the first exercise. This ends on 1.54m.
- Now try the next 5 versions of the 'Sight Reading' exercise with the other 5 groups in the class. Everyone should have had at least one go at Sight Reading.
- Evaluate the importance of Listening in music and how Sight Reading can help enhance musical skills.

Lesson Four - STOMP - Body Percussion

- Today we will introduce the children to STOMP. STOMP is a theatrical percussion group, originating in Brighton that uses body percussion and ordinary objects to make it's sound. It started back in 1991 at the Bloomsbury theatre in London and also the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh. Originally 7 people, it grew to 8 at the end of 91' and since then has grown from strength to strength, touring worldwide including shows in America for the US President Bill Clinton in 2000.
- Show the children the 'Stomp' video. At it's climax, discuss how Stomp uses layering to make it's sound. The very start of the video shows layering clearly. The first man enters, playing a solo broom pattern. Then gradually different people enter playing different rhythmic patterns on their brooms and overlapping their sounds.
- Believer. Body Percussion. Play the 'Believer' video. This will let the children have a go with playing their own version of a Body Percussion song.
- Body Percussion layering. In table group, the children are going to create their own rhythmic layer pattern using body percussion. One player start with a simple pattern. This could be "Stamp - Clap - Click - Click" over and over. Then, player two devises another rhythm to play as a second beat. Just as we have done in the previous lessons. This could be a slow "Leg Tap - Leg Tap". Player three adds a third rhythm and so on. The key here is to compose a simple rhythm that keeps repeating. An Ostinato pattern. The children mustn't make to too complex otherwise it will be hard to play alongside other patterns.
- At the end of the lesson, invite some of the groups to play their patterns to the class. Make sure the children have chance to writer their patterns down in their own way, so they remember them for next week. They could write a clap as an 'X' and a stamp as a 'Circle' and so on.

Lesson Five - Ordinary Object Layering

- Today the children will turn their body percussion layering compositions into object compositions.
- The children were introduced to STOMP in the last lesson. Today the class are going to have a go with creating their own STOMP compositions.
- Prepare the lesson by accumulating some objects to create sound. For example, brooms, balls, books, rulers, crisp packets, tins of pasta. Any everyday item that could be used by the children to make a sound. Watch the 'Cup Song' video in it's

entirety and the 'Sounds' video from 17.30m. You will only need to show this end part of the video as a reference to layering. This will give children an idea as to how they layer sounds of everyday items to make music. Just like Stomp.

- Give the children plenty of time to practice. Make sure they are using their written compositions from last week to remember how their rhythms were played.
- Ask the children to show their compositions at the end of the lesson.

Lesson Six - Blue Umbrella

- To finish this scheme the children will play a variety of different instruments along to the animated film 'The Blue Umbrella'.
- In this final crusade, the children will be in charge of a percussion station, each holding 5 instruments!
- Split the class into groups of 5 and make sure each child has a number from 1-5. First of all they will see what 5 instruments they are in charge of. Then, as they follow the music, they will play their layer as the instrument hits the Yellow Bar on the Left Hand side of the screen.
- This gives the children an example of how layers can come together in an orchestra and form the accompaniment for an emotional piece of animation.
- To finish the scheme evaluate the word 'Layering' and discuss the different ways in which the children have explored the word and how they have brought it to life!